DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 004 TM 030 802

AUTHOR Brown, Judith O.

TITLE The Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living: A Case Study of Adults in College Who Developed an Experiential Learning Portfolio Based on Professional Work Experiences.

PUB DATE 2000-04-26

NOTE 64p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000). Co-authors were Jo D. Gallagher, Valeria J. Janesick, and Douglas H. Smith.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Adult Students; *College Students; Education Work Relationship; *Experiential Learning; Higher Education; Interviews; *Portfolios (Background Materials); Student Attitudes; *Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This study examined the perspectives of eight adult college students who developed experiential learning portfolios based on their experiences in the workplace. Individual interviews were conducted to obtain participants' opinions and attitudes on the development of the experiential learning portfolio. Three major themes emerged from the data. After developing the portfolio, students expressed changes in their understanding of their professional abilities and of themselves in the workplace. Students also better understood the role of work in their lives. A final theme was that of better understanding of how and why students had accomplished what they did in their professional lives. In spite of the diverse backgrounds of these adult students, they shared common experiences in the portfolio process. Findings support the inclusion of the portfolio option in colleges and universities that serve working adults, and they support the assumption that adults learn in a variety of ways both in academic and workplace environments. Two appendixes contain sample parts of a portfolio and guides for portfolio document review. (Contains 55 references.) (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 441 004

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS, LA
APRIL 20000

Paper Presentation
Workplace Learning SIG
Session 27.21
Wednesday April 26th at 2:15 p.m.
Sheraton, Oakley Room 4th Floor

The Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living: A Case Study of Adults in College Who Developed an Experiential Learning Portfolio Based on Professional Work Experiences.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

J. Brown

TM030802

Primary/Presenting Author: Judith O. Brown, Barry University Miami, FL

Co-Authors: Jo. D. Gallagher, Florida International University/Miami, FL
Valerie J. Janesick, Roosevelt University/Chicago, IL
Douglas H. Smith, Florida International University/ Miami, FL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Purpose

In accord with the theme of AERA's 2000 Conference, *Creating Knowledge from Multiple Perspectives,* the purpose of this paper is to describe and explain the perspectives of 8 adult college students who developed experiential learning portfolios based on their experiences in the workplace. The paper is based on an aspect of the presenting author's dissertation that explored the impact of the portfolio development process on students' perceptions of their professional lives.

Background

By the end of the year 2000, 50% of all college students will be adults (Kerka, 1995). The majority of these students attend school part-time while maintaining full-time careers. Institutions of higher learning have spent a tremendous amount of time and resources to develop undergraduate degree programs to serve this population. As a result, nearly 800 colleges and universities in the United States offer adult students the option of developing an experiential learning portfolio—based primarily on their work life—as a component of their degree program (Flint, 1998). Literally, tens of thousands of working adults have completed portfolios for college credit; yet, there is little research on the impact of the portfolio development process on students' understanding of the learning they derived from analyzing, reflecting on, and writing about their careers. Even less information is available on how these students/workers may have used the learning they gained from developing a portfolio. Consequently, this study examined the impact of portfolio development from the students' perspectives to explore connections between academia and the world of work and to better understand learning no matter where or how it occurred.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the study consisted of theories and empirical studies on how adults learn, how experiences are transformed into learning, and how the academic quality of nontraditional degrees with a portfolio component are viewed in academia. In the case of adult learning, five classical theories (behaviorist, gestaltist, humanist, cognitivist, and social learning) and four more recent theories (andragogy, self-directed learning, transformation theory, and situated cognition) on how learning is acquired were explored (Ausubel, Novack, & Hanesian, 1978; Bandura, 1970; Choi & Hannafin, 1995; Kohler, 1957; Knowles, 1984; Maslow, 1970; Mezirow, 1990; Piaget, 1972; Rogers, 1983; Skinner, 1962; Thorndike, 1913; Tough, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978).

Theories and studies concerning the transformation of experiences into learning center primarily around the ideas of Boud (1993b), Kolb (1984), and Dominice (1990) who used educational autobiography as an instructional strategy for adult and traditional-aged students. Boud's ideas focus primarily on experiential learning in the workplace and the notion that meaningful experiences and the use of reflection are critical in learning (Boud, 1993a, 1993b; Boud & Walker, 1991). Boud underscored the need to incorporate adult students' experiences in the design of instructional strategies in the workplace. He proposed a three-stage interactive model to consider in the development of workplace training. Stage One or Preparation focused on the learner, the learning milieu, and the skills/strategies brought to the learning milieu as well as those to be gained from it. Stage Two or Experience incorporated Stage One into the training experience (learning) with special emphasis on reflection-in-action during training through noticing, intervening, and intent. Stage Three or Reflective Processes emphasized a re-evaluation

of the training event. Attention to the dynamic interplay in all three stages accounts for the transformation of experiences into learning (Boud & Walker, 1991).

Kolb's four-stage experiential learning model is not workplace specific in its explanation of how experiences are transformed into learning. Rather it remains the most widely used explanation of the transformation process in portfolio development programs. The model consists of a four-stage learning cycle beginning with the concrete experience (CE), followed by reflective observation (RO), which leads to abstract conceptualization or theory building (AC) and ends with active experimentation (AE) or application. As with Boud's theory, the learner is an active participant in all of the stages (Baker & Kolb, 1990).

While Boud and Kolb are the most noted theorists in the experiential learning transformation literature, other scholars and researchers have proposed models to illustrate how experiences lead to learning. Cowan (1988) presented a model of experiential learning with recommendations on how adult learning facilitators can promote it in practice. Sorohan (1993) connected theories of cognitive psychology to experiential learning in order to enhance learning from experiences in the workplace. She summarized her findings in five assumptions: "1. learning is imbedded in individual experiences; 2. learning is most effective in context; 3. collaboration enhances learning; 4. learners continuously create knowledge; and 5. learners need to recognize and question tacit assumptions" (p. 54).

The participants in this study were encouraged to use Kolb's model to express how their experiences were transformed into learning. This required reflection beyond memory in the portfolio development process that concurs with Marsick's (1988) ideas on the importance of "reflectivity and critical reflectivity" (p. 197) in formal and informal workplace learning. She argues that "training has been dominated by behaviorism" (p. 197) and should also consider self-

reflective aspects. She also emphasizes the need for "action learning" whereby workplace learning integrates "personal and job-related development" (Marsick, 1990, p. 37).

In addition to the previously mentioned learning theories, proponents and opponents of the use of experiential learning portfolios in college were reviewed (Keaton, 1992; Spanard, 1990; Thomson, 1988; Tucker & Murphy, 1990; Whitaker, 1989). Two major points of contention between advocates and critics of experiential learning portfolios as a component of college degree programs center on issues of academic quality. They are: a) the processes of evaluating learning and equating it to academic learning and b) the validity of student-generate versus research generated theories (Bourgeois & Lieonard, 1992; Miller, 1991; West & Fraser, 1992). Figure 1 summarizes the main aspects of the conceptual framework in this study.

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to understand, describe, and explain the perspectives of the participants on their professional lives both before and after portfolio development. Therefore, a qualitative method of inquiry was used on a select group of students from Barry University's School of Adult and Continuing Education in Miami, Florida to elicit an in-depth view of each students' portfolio experience (see Appendix A for sample parts of a portfolio). Individual interviews were conducted to obtain the participants' opinions and attitudes on the development of an experiential learning portfolio for college credit. The exploratory questions that guided the study were: a) what were the students' perceptions about their work lives before portfolio development, b) what were their perceptions after portfolio development, c) what did they learn from the portfolio development process, and d) how did the process of developing a portfolio change their views of the ways learning took place throughout their careers?

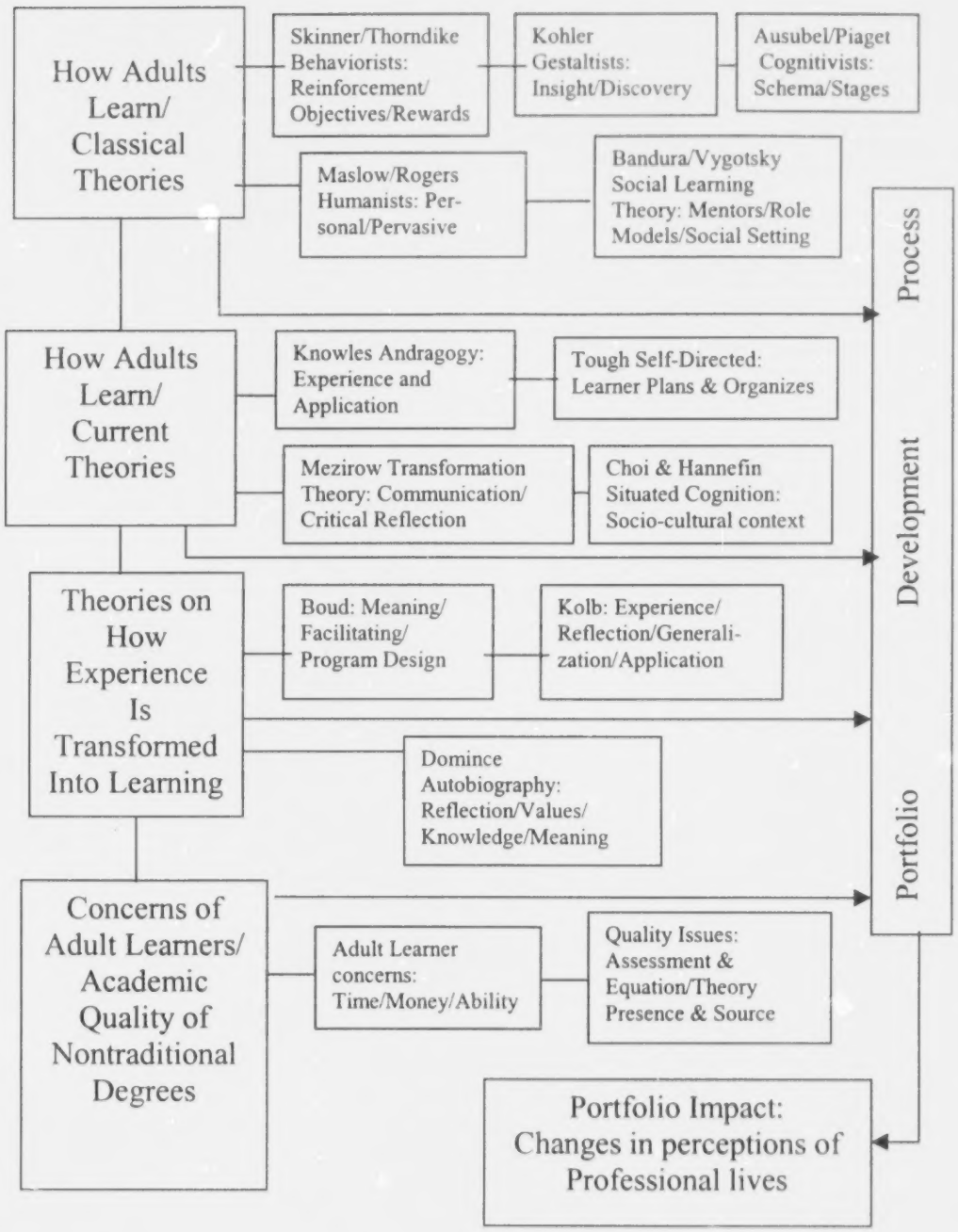
How Adults Learn/ Classical Theories
Skinner/Thorndike Behaviorists: Reinforcement/ Objectives/Rewards
Kohler Gestaltists: Insight/Discovery
Ausubel/Piaget Cognitivists: Schema/Stages
Maslow/Rogers Humanists: Personal/Pervasive
Bandura/Vygotsky Social Learning Theory: Mentors/Role Models/Social Setting
How Adults Learn/ Current Theories
Knowles Andragogy: Experience and Application
Tough Self-Directed: Learner Plans & Organizes
Mezirow Transformation Theory: Communication/ Critical Reflection
Choi & Hannefin Situated Cognition: Socio-cultural context
Theories on How Experience Is Transformed Into Learning
Boud: Meaning/ Facilitating/ Program Design
Kolb: Experience/ Reflection/Generalization/Application
Domince Autobiography: Reflection/Values/ Knowledge/Meaning
Concerns of Adult Learners/ Academic Quality of Nontraditional Degrees
Adult Learner concerns: Time/Money/Ability
Quality Issues: Assessment & Equation/Theory Presence & Source
Portfolio Impact: Changes in perceptions of Professional lives
Process
Development
Portfolio

Figure 1. Model of conceptual framework for a case study of adult college students who developed an experiential learning

A case study design was employed to focus the study on the portfolio experiences of 8 adult students who had completed portfolios. The participants were interviewed on audiotape, one-to-one, using semi-structured, open-ended questions (Janesick, 1998; Kvale, 1996). Prior to each interview, I read the student's portfolio to familiarize myself with the unique background of the person being interviewed and to provide more than one data source (Berg, 1998). I took field notes before and after the interviews to aid in the description of the participants (Geertz, 1973; Stake, 1995). I also kept a reflective journal that proved critical in identifying the study major findings (Eisner, 1998).

The selection of the participants was purposive. One male and 1 female student representing 4 racial/ethnic groups (African-American, Caribbean Black, Caucasian, and Hispanic) and of varying ages (30s to 50s) were selected from a pool of 18 prospects. The participants signed informed consent letters and were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity (see Table 1). I was interested in a representative sample of the student population and in exploring—as a sideline—how the variables of age, gender, and ethnic/cultural background affected the portfolio experience of the participants.

To increase the understanding of the findings, I used triangulation (Denzin, 1978) in the areas of data methods, sources, collection techniques, and points of analysis. It required 3 months to read eight portfolios and to collect two audiotaped interview sessions from each of the 8 participants, and an additional month to move from initial analysis—performed on an on-going, constant comparative manner (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) during data collection—to the identification of categories, codes, themes, and components. Various coding and categorizing systems had been considered prior to data collection and were amended as the study unfolded.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants Identified by Pseudonyms.

Participants	---------Age---------			---------Marital Status--------			--Children--		--Motivation/Return to College--	
(N = 8)	3 0's	40's	50's	Married	Divorced	Not Married	Yes	No	Career	Personal
African-American Female = Kenyatta	X				X		X (3)		X	X
African-American Male = Luther		X		X			X (3)		X	
Caribbean Female = Antoinette	X				X		X (1)		X	X
Caribbean Male = Churchill		X		X				X	X	
Caucasian Female = Ginger		X				X Widow	X (1)		X	X
Caucasian Male = Carl	X			X			X (2)		X	
Hispanic Female = Mariela			X	X			X (1)		X	X
Hispanic Male = Juan	X					X Never		X	X	X

Initially, the data were categorized and openly coded (Creswell, 1998) by source (e.g., portfolio documents and verbatim interview transcriptions). The portfolio documents at first produced 4 categories and 15 sub-codes. Open coding of interviews resulted in 7 categories and 28 sub-codes. I then axial-coded (Creswell, 1998) categories and sub-codes across sources using documents, interviews, as well as field notes and my researcher's reflective journal. Finally, these data were further reduced for redundancy and reorganized into four major themes—each with three to four corresponding components—and two sub-themes that constituted what the data revealed (for the purpose of this paper, three themes are discussed). It took 2 weeks to determine the major themes from the thrice-coded data and an additional 3 months to compile a written version of the findings (see Table 2 for a matrix of the methodology in regard to the exploratory questions).

In the area of confirmation, descriptive validity and credibility were taken into account during the course of the study by comparing/contrasting data sources and employing member check and peer review of the data analysis findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I addressed the multiple roles I played as researcher, portfolio program director, and instructional designer of portfolio materials by "bracketing" (Creswell, 1998, p. 52) or putting aside my previous judgments or my perceptions of and perspectives on the portfolio process to the best of my ability. I clearly stated my bias' in the study limitations section, and discussed my roles with the participants before the interviews. I encouraged them not to see me as the program director but rather as someone that was trying to decide on whether or not to institute a portfolio program in an undergraduate degree program for adults.

Table 2.

Methodology Matrix with Exploratory Research Questions and Corresponding Types of Data Required, Sources, Methods, Gathering Techniques, and Points of Analysis.

Exploratory Questions	Types of Data/Info Required	Data Sources	Methods	Data Gathering Techniques	Points of Analysis of the Data
1. What elements constituted the perspective of adults on their professional lives before they developed a portfolio?	Thick, rich description of perceptions, feelings, experiences, attitudes on their professional lives.	Adult students and field notes.	One-to-one interviews.	Interview question guides and verbatim transcription of interviews.	Identification of categories and codes, emerging themes and components, matrices to organize data from each source, researcher journal, member check, peer audit.
2. What variables influenced the perspective of adults on their professional lives after they developed a portfolio?	Thick, rich description of perceptions, feelings, experiences, and attitudes on their professional lives.	Adult students, portfolios, and field notes.	One-to-one interviews and document reviews.	Interview question guides, verbatim transcription of interviews, and collected portfolios.	Identification of categories and codes, emerging themes and components, matrices to organize data from each source, researcher journal, member check, peer audit, and comparison of data from methods.
3. What types of learning took place in adults as a result of developing a portfolio?	Thick, rich description of perceptions, feelings, experiences, attitudes on their professional lives.	Adult students, portfolios, and field notes.	One-to-one interviews and document reviews.	Interview question guides, transcription of interviews, and collected portfolios.	Identification of categories and codes, emerging themes and components, matrices to organize data from each source, researcher journal, member check, peer audit, and comparison of data from methods.
4. How did the development of a portfolio change the students' understanding of how learning took place in their professional lives?	Thick, rich description of perceptions, feelings, experiences, attitudes on the portfolio process' impact.	Adult students and field notes.	One-to-one interviews.	Interview question guides and verbatim transcription of interviews.	Identification of categories, emerging themes and components, matrices to organize data from each source, researcher journal, member check, peer audit.

Findings

Three major themes involving learning from and in the workplace emerged from the analysis of the data:

1. After developing a portfolio, students expressed changes in their understanding of their professional abilities and of themselves in the workplace. The changes were (a) the increased recognition of all they have accomplished to date in their careers and (b) a sense of self-discovery and of personal empowerment to achieve their professional goals.

2. After developing a portfolio, adult students better understood the role of work in their lives. The components of this theme were: (a) the value of learning through work experiences, (b) the role of mentors in one's life and the participant's role as mentor, and (c) the value of teamwork.

3. After developing a portfolio, adult students experienced a greater understanding of how and why they accomplished what they did in their professional lives. Before portfolio development, they were primarily "doers," not often analyzing how they got from place A to place B in their lives.

Theme One

Increased Recognition of Their Accomplishments

In regard to Theme 1, all of the participants responded that they had both an increased awareness of their previous professional accomplishments and a deeper sense of self-discovery after completing their portfolios. Luther expressed his beliefs this way as a type of self-affirmation:

> It made me realize that I had accomplished much more in life than I [previously] realized. It made me more cognizant of my abilities [and] that I could do so many different things; that I had so much knowledge [and] that I wasn't so dumb.

Without exception, the participants voiced a sense of amazement at their professional accomplishments after they completed their portfolios. The normally reserved Mariela was enthusiastic in her response:

> Developing a portfolio changed my whole perception of my professional and personal life accomplishments. [Through] this process I discovered abilities acquired through my years of working experience that I didn't even realize I possessed. This has been [critical] in improving my self-confidence.

This increased recognition of one's accomplishments was a common theme throughout the responses. As a group, though dissimilar in gender, age, and cultural background, they all seemed to be saying that the fact that their professional and personal lives are so busy often prevented them from realizing how much they did and are doing. When they stepped back, reflected, and wrote about their lives, they had the opportunity to see patterns and trends. Antoinette was animated when she spoke:

> The insight gained from [my] portfolio helped me to see, as the slogan goes, "You've come a long way baby!" in my accomplishments, achievements, [and] my development. A degree with a portfolio makes you assess your professional life; without a portfolio, you just know your academic strengths, but you don't know your professional [abilities] and strengths.

Kenyatta expressed a similar sentiment and more when she commented on her newfound sense of recognition of her work and personal accomplishments:

> I just didn't realize how much I did in my life. The portfolio has helped me to value me more as a person and working professional. I really got a deeper insight of everything I knew, and of me as a person, as a professional and as a mother, and anything else that had anything to do with my life.

Self-Discovery and Empowerment

Closely related to the participants' deeper realization of their abilities were their feelings of self-discovery and personal empowerment. Mariela spoke previously with excitement about

her increase in self-confidence. She was more pensive, however, as she explained her greater sense of self-discovery:

> Well, although it was difficult, it was a fulfilling experience because you started unveiling an aspect of your life that you never saw about it, and never took the time to think of it. It was a discovery of myself that gave me satisfaction that I have accomplished so many things and I have acquired so much knowledge while I was performing my [work] duties. At the end, I was surprised to find out my own qualifications.

Churchill was a bit more enthusiastic in his nonetheless thoughtful description of self-discovery and empowerment after completing his portfolio and the importance of sharing it with his family and manager:

> You know, it sort of gave me more pep in my step and actually gave me a sense of accomplishment and pride. It also made me realize how marketable I am. It did, it did a lot of things for me but it really gave me a sense of empowerment. I shared it with my wife and she was just glowing. My boss, I shared it [with him] and, of course, thanked him for his letter. [I] also [showed it to] my brother and my mother. I shared it with everyone—it's an accomplishment and an achievement and they were all happy for me, especially my big brother. You know, I am the only one in my family who did not go to college and the reason why I didn't was because I wanted to start my career right away, which I did. Now that I've completed this much, I'm happy that I'm doing it. My big brother got his Ph.D. and said [to me] "I'm happy the way I did it, but sometimes I wish I had your experience from life." It was nice to share this with him; he has been an inspiration to me, he always encouraged me.

Luther summed up his feelings in a succinct manner and in a melancholy tone when he said, "the [portfolio] autobiography, it gave me a sense of my self-worth. It made me realize that . . . you might be 42, you might be deeply in debt, [but] you learned a lot."

Of all the statements voiced by the participants in this area, no one expressed the far-ranging impact of the themes of professional accomplishments, self-discovery, and empowerment more vividly than Kenyatta. Her face was glowing with pride when she said:

> I don't think I weighed [my jobs] as much before I did my portfolio. I didn't realize my accomplishments until I actually had to write them down, and that was the only way I thought, "Oh, I can't believe I did all this stuff or know all this stuff," you know, because you get so used to just doing it on a work basis but never realize how it correlates to the

outside world and not only just your small work world. So before I started [the portfolio] I just didn't realize how it really correlates to the outside world. [Then], during the process I had to stop because I got so overwhelmed. I mean, there were times when I thought " who is this person?" [Developing] the learning assessment worksheet blew me away [because] I had to actually depict everything [I did] and what I learned from it. I couldn't believe how much I have done and learned from working. How much knowledge I had and just because I didn't have a degree attached to it, but it was a vast amount of knowledge. I just was overwhelmed that I knew so much, that I had accomplished so much in that time period. It gave me more confidence—I mean people started seeing the change in meetings. I would like talk quietly and maybe I'd make a suggestion, but as I worked with the worksheet I got more confidence that helped me. I said, "I know all this stuff. I must be good." So I then gained more confidence as a speaker—I was [more positive]—it helped build my ego. It was a great ego booster, to let you know that you were able to do this and you didn't need—if you did get a pat on the back, that was good, but if you didn't, you had the ability to go back and look at this packet and say, "I did this, I do know what I'm doing," and it made you less scared to make a judgment or a decision, for me. [My self-confidence] actually started coming from the inside so even if somebody wasn't happy with something, it was like, "I know I did it right. They'll figure it out later on down the line." I was able to be fulfilled, self-motivated and move forward, take more initiatives, more chances, and maybe walk on that edge and go, "I'm going to make this decision. It may not be a hundred percent but I have stuff to back it up and I may be right, and it may be the best way for the time being."

Theme Two

This theme dealt with the participants' perspectives of the important role of work in their lives in three areas: a) the value of learning from work experiences, b) the influence of mentors and being mentors, and c) the place of teamwork in the work environment.

Value of Learning Through Work Experiences

Respondents indicated that after developing the portfolio they not only greatly increased their appreciation of their professional accomplishments and abilities, but they also came to realize how important a role work had played in the things they learned over the years and in making them the people they are today. Regardless of age, gender, and background, all of the participants attached a deeper sense of meaning and value to their work experiences as a result of examining their professional lives through the portfolio experience. Writing in her portfolio about her nursing career, Ginger was adamant about this, "I believe there is no textbook that can

ever replace hands-on experience." In our interview, she elaborated on this point and how the portfolio experience reinforced her understanding of who she is at this point in her life:

> I have been a nurse for twenty-four years. I've been so lucky—I've been in the right place at the right time, and it's followed me throughout my entire career. I don't have a title after my name, but I know in my heart that the things I've done have impacted in a positive way not only patients' lives but my own life. I don't think there is any better teacher than hands-on experience. I think that you know that it does everybody good to stop [and reflect] at one point or another in their life no matter where they are. [The portfolio] came at a time of my life when I needed to know that I've done a good job. I needed to know that I am in a good place and that I am still doing a good job. I needed to remind myself that [though] I've had some things happen in my life, I have done the best I can . . . and the portfolio just kind of put the whole thing into perspective for me.

Juan had a similar outlook about the importance of learning through his work experiences. I had asked him in the interview how he decided to move from studying accounting to working in the field of computers:

> Here I was, I started in a field that was accounting and it's not totally unrelated to computers but it was different. Because of my experience and the influence that my work was having at the time, I changed my mind and I started going into computers, so definitely the work experience helps you—it doesn't only help it molds you, and it makes up your mind. I think of people that go to school and spend ten years going to school, getting a doctorate and all, and then they decide to go out in the workforce and they find out the practice is not all that it is cracked up to be. And I had an opportunity to actually practice in the field before I even graduated so that definitely work experience and the amount of work—I mean the amount of learning that you are getting from out in the field, it doesn't compare. School will give you all the school knowledge and finding out where to [locate] information and that's invaluable. It's an invaluable lesson that you learn in school, but work experience has definitely has a lot of knowledge to it.

Connected to Juan's statements about the value of learning through work was his perspective on the value of the portfolio experience in identifying his work competencies. He spoke about how developing a portfolio helped give him a new perspective on his professional and personal life. I had asked him if he could tell me about the benefits of doing it and his response both echoed Ginger's experience and those of the other participants:

> I think it's the one single thing that will teach you the most about your life. I kind of compare it to the last minutes of your life if you have to relive you entire life and figure

> out which were the right moments and the most difficult moments and the most satisfying and the most influential moments and that's what it does. You sit down and you say, wow I have lived thirty-something years, what has really made a difference in my life? What has really made me who I am today? Who are the influences and who were the people who have influenced me and [what are] the jobs that have influenced me? That's the perspective that it gives you; it gives you a chance to review your entire life and figure out who you are today.

Carl also talked about his opinion of the value of learning from work experiences. We were discussing college and work experiences and how his department in county government required both a degree and experience to secure a permanent supervisory position. He was emphatic when he said:

> I am a very firm believer that you can go to a college all day [and, yet,] you will learn ninety percent of knowledge and skills out in the real world. You know that's why when the portfolio was brought to my attention, it was very interesting that someone actually wanted to know what I've learned in my life and give me credits for it—to me it was a plus—actually someone read what I did and said "yeah, he is knowledgeable."

As far as the portfolio process helping people realize how work made them who they are today, Antoinette's response, like the others, was revealing when she said:

> I was thinking [after writing the portfolio] that I had worked at one company for fourteen years. So from a young adult I became a woman through working with that particular company. I knew from where I had started and where I was [when I left] that I had moved up but never had I looked at it in this way. What the portfolio made me realize was that I was much more mature, more confident. I never looked at me as somebody who was special in a way.

Mentors and Mentoring Others

The second area, having mentors and being mentors to others, were also part of the participants' common experience. They all talked about the importance of mentors and mentoring in their portfolios and in their interviews. As mentioned in the literature review of this study, social learning theorists stressed the importance of role models and mentors in one's social setting—work, school, etc.—as critical for the learning process (Bandura, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978).

Both Juan and Luther had influential high school counselors and work mentors that came to mind as they developed their portfolios. Juan spoke with excitement about his 12th-grade counselor and how she influenced his role as a mentor to others:

> [While writing my portfolio], I thought about my counselor, and I tried calling back to [my] high school to see if she was still there and, of course, she has retired since, so I was unable to talk to her. I will always remember what it is that she did for me. I remember we spent hours trying to figure out, between my business teacher and her, the ways I [could] cut down some hours, because I was working at night then, so I could [handle] college. And now, at work, I have some people that report to me that are in their 20's—early 20's—and ask whether or not it will be worth going to school other than furthering their education. Every time I sit down with them I feel a little like her. Just trying to give them a little encouragement without having to be way too pushy. I can't help feel a little like that person.

Juan confirmed his supportive, mentor management style when he wrote in his portfolio, "I offer my employees an environment comfortable, enriching, and nurturing. I ensure that they are given plenty of opportunities for their career growth, education, and development." In his interview, Luther spoke of the enormous role mentors played in his life when he was in an alternative high school, especially Mrs. G. "who only saw the good in people." He was also asked if he saw himself as a mentor to children because of his 22 years as a coach in the community with the Optimist Club. He was humble in his response, "When I was writing about it in the portfolio, [I realized] I don't look at myself as a role-model, I look at myself more as a teacher—just to tell them, you know . . . school is very important, stay in school." In his portfolio, he wrote about how critically important his first job mentor (given the initials CC) was in keeping him "on track" and out of trouble as a teenager:

> When I graduated high school, I looked around me and all I saw were bright, intelligent minds going to waste. This was the time of the "cocaine wars" that we heard so much about. With my mentor, CC, in July of 1974, we created Teen King, Inc., a youth self-help organization. Most youth programs during that time wanted to teach youth in a classroom and try to find them jobs. The kids in these programs never got to see past entry-level positions. They never got to see what they could be, what they could aspire to. That's what CC and I wanted to do. With [CC's] support we searched the south end-of-

> town until we could find a former restaurant. We negotiated a lease, did some remodeling, added tables and chairs, and added a stage. We introduced the first teen disco in the county.

Churchill's experience with mentors spanned high school and work also. His usually calm responses were animated when he spoke of people he remembered who mentored him and subsequently got him involved in mentoring others:

> Oh, yes, a big influence in my life [was] the chairman of Coca-Cola—he [helped me] in Junior Achievement—he died a few years back. He always encouraged me, always had time for me. If I called him up—and he was the head of one of the biggest conglomerates in Trinidad, he was very busy but he always made time. He got me very much involved in Junior Achievement. So he was a big influence in my life.

Like Juan, Churchill tried contacting other people who influenced him over the years, and when asked him work mentors, he immediately spoke of several managers in his current company:

> When I was thinking back over the years, there were several teachers, those who were still alive, I tried contacting them and called them—it was good for me to do that, I felt very good, and they were surprised to hear from me. [As for work], I would say my present manager has been influential, he's been a great mentor for me, he keeps encouraging me in the job and in school. He encourages me to keep going when I feel completely exhausted. My previous manager in Detroit there again supported me, encouraged me, telling me I had the ability to do well in the job and to get a degree.

Antoinette and Kenyatta also had influential mentors in their work lives that they spoke about both in their portfolios and in our interviews. For Kenyatta, her first manager was especially important because of her low self-esteem when she entered the work force. She reported that she had little confidence in herself when she took a job with the county. She only had a high school education and a GED at that. She was pensive as she talked about that period of her life:

> It was the director of the department. Before our department got so vast, he used to come around and he used to interact with a lot of people. He'd say, "you know you're very intelligent, you know, a little rough around the edges, but you have potential." He was my mentor and he used to call me—he had these terms, like I was a sharpshooter. He'd

> [aim me in the right direction] and because of him I got promoted to like a lead worker, and they would give me more responsibility and he would talk to me weekly asking, "How are things going?" When they had big meetings with [management] I was actually invited in to actually give a presentation from the worker's point of view. So he motivated me a great deal and a lot, and gave me enough confidence that I started realizing that maybe there was something I could do beyond the GED because getting a GED made me feel like I hadn't really accomplished anything and it really lowered my self-esteem.

When Kenyatta attained her first supervisory position, she incorporated her mentor's management style into her own. In her portfolio, she wrote, "I encouraged my staff to be part of the solution, not just the problems. I believed by getting them involved in the decision-making process, and making them know they were important to the unit promoted motivation." Antoinette was also influenced greatly by her first boss who was a mentor for work as well as a role model for school:

> My ex-boss, because this is somebody who had been, who had come from a New York ghetto—Harlem. He said that from where he had come from had been a long road [to get through work and college] and that I wouldn't have had to do it as hard as he had to because I was in a different setting, it was a different time, and opportunities were there for me to go to school. So he was a great influence in me wanting to move up in my career and finish school.

Regardless of the source—family, work, or community—all of the study participants noted the influence of mentors in their lives and their roles as mentors to others. Their experiences supported the ideas of social learning theorists on the significance of role models and imitation as a source for learning (Bandura, 1970).

Teamwork

The third and final area within this theme is the value of teamwork. From the city office where Mariela worked to the nursing staff of a major hospital where Ginger was employed, teamwork was an important topic in students' portfolios. Mariela was proud of the two-person team, of which she was an integral part that created the human resources department in a local city government office where she has worked for 18 years. Her usual quiet demeanor became

much more enlivened when she said, "we started the personnel department together, [just] the director and me. There was no personnel department because we created and started it from scratch, the two of us—working together." The spirited Ginger expressed her views on teamwork in her usual animated way:

> In nursing, if anybody that thinks that they are the only person that is responsible for a patient's positive outcome—well you just want to laugh in their face. I mean it's just so funny. I mean, when you think of the number of people that it takes just to do a simple a incision of just a little foreign body in your finger, just using a benign example. The secretaries, the housekeeping department, people that you don't even think of that will be involved in their care. And you know it takes everybody's effort, I just find no room for I. I have worked for managers who refer to myself and others as "my employees." They don't own me. We are part of a team. We all work together.

Antoinette's attitude toward teamwork was connected to her role as manager of a team. She laughed when she talked about interacting with others in the workplace and the evolution of her management style, "It's so important because if you don't have a good relationship with your [team members] you're not going to get the tasks done to the best of their abilities. As a result, I think that I have changed my style because I was more of a dictator!"

Theme Three

The third major theme that emerged from the analysis of the data had to do with a greater understanding of how and why they learned what they learned by reflecting on, organizing, analyzing, and writing about their professional lives in a portfolio.

When they were asked about the impact of the portfolio development on their understanding of how they progressed in their careers, I prefaced the question by identifying the portfolio, itself, as a document that required one to reflect a great deal. Then they were asked if, after developing a portfolio, they found themselves more reflective in their professional lives or had they always been so? The answers were as varied as the participants. For example,

Antoinette was one of the respondents who said she had previously reflected about her professional life. However, the combination of reflecting and writing that is required to develop the portfolio brought her to a deeper level of awareness in the area of herself as a professional. Her tone was serious when she replied:

> I used to reflect [on occasion] because you have to do that in order for you to know where you are and where you are going. As I said, I reflected once in awhile because, I guess, every individual will do that—be concerned with where they have been and where they are going. But I never had to write anything about what I've done and the portfolio has done that for me. By writing about me and knowing where I've been and [what] I've gone to in order to be who I am now, the portfolio did something special for me. As I said, it was the first time that I was writing something about me.

Ginger and Carl also said they had been reflective about their professional lives. For Ginger, the process of reflection necessary for portfolio development did help her remember many of the instances in which she was a reflective practitioner:

> Yes, [I was always] very reflective in my work. I [would] recall different situations from the past and things that I have learned from others, things that would help me to interact in a present situation I'm involved in. I was continuously using my old learning. It is not just something like, oh, I knew that once, or oh, I remember that. I am constantly incorporating the past into the now. And the new things that I learn are, of course, incorporated into that too, but past experiences and past learning has, well, that's the way I have always been. And doing a portfolio helped me remember certain people and events when I practiced reflection.

Carl gave his usual, self-assured response to this question. Once more, his confidence as a capable supervisor came through when he said:

> Well, when you try to solve problems or at least that's how I think I always look back to past situations and how problems are solved. As a rule I wouldn't say that all problems are solved by back problems you've dealt with because sometimes you have to have new and innovative ways to approach [problems]. But I guess I always reflected back to see how I handled this type of situation to see if I could apply it again, or if something different had to be done.

Kenyatta, on the other hand, said she gained a new sense of her professional self as a result of reflection. The portfolio process helped her understand how reflective she has been in her job. She expressed it this way:

> I think I have [always had] a systematic way of doing things that I never put a value on until I had to sit down and reflect on it and systematically go through it in order. When someone comes in [your office] and sees what you're doing—right in the middle of it—and it's not quite finished yet—you have every detail here and you're real good at remembering it. Well, it makes you realize that, "Hey, you know, I can do it, I have systematically set up a way to do this." I guess I've always done it before in the past, but reflecting upon it and actually giving value to it is what I was able to do by doing the portfolio. I just never thought about it. I did it but never gave it any thought.

Churchill said he became a more reflective practitioner as a result of the portfolio development experience. Like Kenyatta, he was busy *doing* more than thinking. He talked about it in this way:

> I think, in my jobs, I was just moving as opposed to reflecting. If I did reflect, it was rather quickly because I was into performance, so I didn't employ that reflective process. But through the portfolio development it brought back the memories of the experiences, and it has put more credibility on what I'm doing. It has started a process of me being more aware of what I'm doing on the job.

Luther responded to this question in his usually pensive manner. He separated his personal life from his professional life when he said, "Not in my work life, no. Personally, yes, [but] not professionally, no I never was [reflective]." Mariela intertwined the components of writing and reflection in her response with the toll her busy life takes from being reflective. The emphasis she expressed in the last words of her response revealed, once more, her preoccupation with her English communication skills:

> I believe I would say no about reflection. We live in such a fast world that you don't have time to think about anything. It's a fast paced life that we live. With this—the portfolio—it was nice because, you know, you start taking the time to reflect, especially if you want to write a good essay!

The portfolio, due to its very nature, required the participants to reflect critically on the *what's*, *how's*, and *why's* of learning in their professional and personal lives. Mezirow (1990) defined transformative learning, whether it takes place within professional, personal, or educational settings, as "the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience. Learning includes acting on these insights" (p. xvi). The findings of the study indicate that the participants experienced varying degrees of transformative learning through the portfolio development process. The students acted upon their newfound insights in their professional and personal lives. Thus, Kenyatta was more confident of herself in meetings, because she had a "blueprint" of her past performances that helped her take more risks in expressing her ideas. Ginger, who was aware of her professional goals prior to completing her portfolio, received a necessary confirmation of her future direction from the portfolio experience. It came at a time in her life when she needed the added assurance and reinforcement to believe in herself and go forward with her professional goals. For Ginger, the portfolio "really made me stop and think . . . it made me remember how I started . . . the steps I have taken along the way . . . things I haven't thought about in years [because] I get so caught up in everyday situations."

Summary of Findings

In summary, whether in their written portfolios or in their interviews, participants described a more profound understanding of the role that work has played in their lives. Throughout the portfolio development process, they appeared to gain insight into the enormous impact that learning from people and experiences in the workplace had on all areas of their professional lives and adult development. Many psychologists and educators (Merriam & Yang,

1996) had noted the effect of work on one's psyche and world-view. Erickson (1982), Havinghurst (1972), and Kegan (1995), to name a few, wrote of the positive and negative connections between work and development. Theories and studies on organizational culture since the 1970s by Ouci (1981), Bolman and Deal (1984), and others support Marsick's (1990) observations on the inextricable connection between workplace learning, work culture, and oneself:

> Individual meanings are influenced at work by the collective meanings and agreements that often remain implicit in the organization's culture. Learning reflects a concern for the transformation of personal frames of reference. It is impossible to separate one's professional, work-related knowledge and one's skills from the rest of oneself. (p. 24)

This study demonstrated the impact of work through students' written accounts—portfolios—and in interviews. It is important to note that, before beginning the portfolio, these students believed they had a good understanding of their professional and personal accomplishments. The increased insights they experienced in these areas after portfolio development support the processes of analysis, reflection, and writing in learning.

Conclusions

A number of positive learning outcomes, from these students' perspectives, were experienced as a result of developing a portfolio based on their work experiences:

Perceptions Before Portfolio Development

Prior to the development of a portfolio, all the study participants had a good, general understanding of their professional and personal accomplishments. Six of the 8 participants had some previous college experience, and while they were enthusiastic about finding a nontraditional degree program that would validate their experiential learning, they also had a number of concerns and fears about meeting the educational challenges of portfolio development.

Realizations After Portfolio Development

After developing a portfolio, participants experienced an increased awareness of their professional and personal accomplishments and gained more confidence in their ability to meet educational goals. They experienced a new sense of confidence and pride in their abilities and were surprised and empowered by the extent of their life accomplishments to date. They also recognized more fully the learning that took place in all areas of their lives.

The Role of Work

A further conclusion has to do with participants gaining a better understanding of the work environment as a place of acquiring knowledge, as an influence on one's growth and development, as a source of mentors, and as an environment in which teamwork was critical. From the writings of Marx and Engels in the mid-19th century to Marsick (1990) and Kegan (1995), work has been cited as having an enormous impact on the definition of ourselves in society. This was certainly true for Antoinette who "grew up" in her work environment. It was also true for Ginger, Luther, Carl, Churchill, Juan, and Mariela who experienced a great deal of their identity—albeit not all—through their participation in the world of work.

With regard to the role of mentors in their lives, all but one of the study participants either mentioned in their portfolios the impact of mentors in their lives—in high school, or in the workplace—or spoke in their interviews about the importance of mentors. Juan, Luther, Churchill, and Ginger were compelled to contact previous secondary school and/or workplace mentors to communicate to them the impact they made on their lives. This finding strongly supports the ideas of social learning theorists discussed in the literature review. The portfolio experience underscored for students the learning they acquired by being mentored by others as well as being mentors to others in work and in the community.

Finally, in this area, the importance of teamwork in the workplace was underscored by the majority of the participants. Whether " the team"consisted of one other individual as in Mariela's case or a group of people as in Ginger's medical experience, the idea of working with others to accomplish work goals was validated in the written portfolio documents and in the interviews.

Positive Learning Outcomes

The study findings supported other conclusions from the data. The information collected from portfolio documents and interviews indicated that the portfolio development process improved students' written communication and organizational skills. It also increased their self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-value. Students experienced a more profound recognition of their competencies after portfolio completion. The portfolio provided students with a concrete record of what they had learned from their professional experiences and community activities. It also enabled them to use this knowledge, gained through critical reflection, to work toward their professional, personal, and life goals. Thus, the portfolio experience produced a transformation in the participants with real-life applications.

In a second 20-minute interview focused mainly on demographic questions (marital status, children, etc.), I did conclude by asking the participants if the portfolio experience helped them to become more focused on their future professional goals? Even though the majority of the participants responded that they had a good idea of their future goals, prior to the portfolio experience, they expressed a deeper confidence in their abilities to reach their goals. Juan and Ginger responded in similar ways. Juan said, "I was aware of my future goals, but completing the portfolio made things more concrete for me. By looking back, it made me feel more confident I can accomplish even more in the future." Ginger's response echoed Juan's. She was more thoughtful than enthusiastic when she said:

> I pretty much knew where I was headed. [The portfolio] actually didn't help me determine my future [direction] but it certainly helped me to reflect on my past and I needed that reinforcement to be able to go forward, to actually believe in myself. So it reminded me just how far I've come and, if I could do that, then I could continue to be successful. It didn't develop a goal; it motivated me to go forward.

Some Final Thoughts

Portfolio Impact and Diversity

The findings add a new dimension on diversity questions in the areas of age, gender, and ethnic/cultural considerations. It appears that the learning experienced by the participants transcended their varying demographic characteristics. Despite their diverse backgrounds, the participants shared common experiences from the portfolio process in such areas as: (a) an increased awareness of professional achievements, (b) a sense of self-discovery and increased self-knowledge, and (c) the impact of work on their adult learning and development.

Use of Portfolios as Instructional Technique

Programs designed to meet the educational needs of this large and increasing population are an on-going challenge to higher education institutions. The highest standards of academic quality and degree integrity must be upheld while acknowledging the learning that is inherent in an experience-based student population. The study findings support the inclusion of the portfolio option in colleges and universities that serve working adults. It can also be used as a journaling technique (Marsick, 1990) to improve learning in the workplace.

Holistic Learning and Knowledge

Learning and knowledge are acquired neither solely in the classroom nor exclusively in the world of experience, work or elsewhere. A more holistic type of learning can come from the integration of knowledge from multiple settings and a variety of acquisition modalities. Either in the portfolios or in the interviews, the participants in the study expressed some aspect of gaining

knowledge through the selected traditional and more recent theories on how adults learned discussed previously in the conceptual framework. This supports Kolb's (1992) declaration at an experiential learning conference that "learning is big."

Traditionalists in higher education do not doubt the importance of experience in learning but do question its place in degree programs. The researcher's experience with thousands of adult students who developed experiential learning portfolios supports a place for both academic and experiential learning in adult undergraduate degree programs. Portfolios can offer a bridge between learning from experience in the workplace (practical) and academic knowledge (theoretical) acquired in the classroom.

Implications for Workplace Learning

The study findings support the assumption that adults learn in a variety of ways both in academia and in the workplace. The participants spoke of the many circumstances that enabled them to acquire skills and knowledge throughout their professional careers. This includes learning through repetition and reward (behaviorists), through the help of mentors (social learning theory), through building upon previous experiences (cognitivists), and through meaningful and relevant experiences (andragogy, humanists). Moreover, increasing the effectiveness of learning in academic and in organizational settings may be achieved by emphasizing the "marriage" between theory and practice. According to current research, the "skilled application of knowledge" (Bell, Kehrhahn, & Sheckly, 2000, p. 21) improves proficiency and performance. This was borne out by statements in each participant's portfolio on the importance of both education and practice to acquire workplace expertise (see Appendix B).

Additionally, the importance of critical reflection on and writing about one's experiences cannot be underestimated in the learning process. Marsick's (1988, 1990) work in this area

calls for a more humanistic view of workplace training that combines reflection, writing (journals), building on the learner's experience, and the trainer as a role-model and facilitator of learning.

The responses of the participants in the study echoed the findings of researchers of both academic and workplace learning venues. Learning is multi-dimensional. To improve the acquisition of skills and knowledge in any educational setting, designers and facilitators of learning must move away from context-heavy classes, guide the learner in an environment supportive of learning and development, role-model what they teach, incorporate practice into learning exercises, solicit reflective feedback from participants, and empower learners through self-assessment (Bell, Kehrhahn, & Sheckly, 2000; Brookfield, 1991; Knowles, 1984; Marsick, 1990). Thus, educators and human resource development professionals may have similar goals—to increase human performance and to foster adult development for the benefit of the individual, the workplace, and the society, in general.

List of References

Ausubel, D., Novack, J., & Hanesian, H. (1978). *Educational psychology: A cognitive view* (2nd ed.) New York: Holt. Rinehart and Winston.

Baker, R. J., & Kolb, D. A. (1990). *Learning style exercise.* Boston: McBer & Company.

Bandura, A. (1970). *Social learning theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bell, A. A., Kehrhahn, M., & Sheckly, B. G. (2000). New practices for workplace learning. *CAEL Forum and News. 23*(2), 20-23.

Berg, B. L. (1998) *Qualitative research for social sciences* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1984). *Modern approaches to understanding and managing organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Boud, D. (1993a). Experience as the base for learning. *Higher Education Research and Development, 12*(1), 33-44.

Boud, D. (Ed.). (1993b). *Using experience for learning.* Bristol, PA: Open University Press.

Boud, D., & Walker, D. (1991). *Experiential learning: Reflection at work.* Victoria, Australia: Deakin University.

Bourgeois, E., & Lienard, G. (1992). Developing adult education in universities: A political view. *Higher Education Management, 4*(1), 23-30.

Brookfield, S. D. (1991). *The skillful teacher.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Choi, J., & Hannafin, M. (1995). Situated cognition and learning environments: Roles, structures, and implications. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 43*(2), 53-69.

Cowan, J. (1988). Learning to facilitate experiential learning. *Studies in Continuing Education,10*(1), 19-29.

Creswell, J. W. (1998*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). *Sociological methods: A source book* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dominice, P. F. (1990). Composing educational biographies: Group reflection through life histories. In J. Mezirow (Ed.), *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning* (pp. 194-212). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Eisner, E. W. (1998). *The enlightened eye.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Erickson, E. H. (1982). *The life cycle completed: A review.* New York: Norton.

Eversoll, D. B. (1986). Institutional planning with successful participants: A "listening ear" for adult baccalaureate degree graduates. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 4*(2), 24-26.

Flint, T. (1999). Prior learning assessment: A status report. *Assessment and Accountability Forum, 1*(IX), 15-16, 19.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Geertz (Ed.). *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic Books.

Havinghurst, R. J. (1972). *Developmental tasks and education.* (3rd. ed). New York: McKay.

Janesick, V. J. (1998). *"Stretching" exercises for qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Keaton, M. T. (1992). Assessment of experiential learning. *National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning Proceedings* (pp. 28-30). Trenton, NJ: Council on Adult and Experiential Learning Publications.

Kegan, R. (1995). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kerka, S. (1995). Adult learner retention revisited. (*ERIC Digest No. 166).*Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 389 880)

Knowles, M. S. (1984). *Andragogy in action.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kohler, W. (1957). *The mentality of apes.* Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kolb, D. (1992, November). [Keynote address]. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the CAEL International Assembly, San Diego, CA.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Marsick, V. J. (1990). Action learning and reflection in the workplace. In J. Mezirow (Ed.). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning* (pp. 23-46). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Marsick, V.J. (1988). Learning in the workplace: The case for reflectivity and critical reflectivity. *Adult education quarterly, 38*(4), 187-198.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Merriam, S. B., & Yang, B. (1996). A longitudinal study of adult life experiences and developmental outcomes. *Adult Education Quarterly, 46*, 62-81.

Mezirow, J., & Associates (Eds.). (1990). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, D. A. (1991). No campus, no problem: Nontraditional degree granting programs. *Adult Learning, 3*(3), 17-19.

Ouci, W. G. (1981). *Theory Z.* New York: Avon Books.

Piaget, J. (1972). Intellectual evolution from adolescent to adulthood. *Human Development, 16,* 346-370.

Rogers, C. R. (1983). *Freedom to learn for the '80s.* Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Sansregret, M. (1991, October). *Recognition of practical knowledge through a prior assessment*

Skinner, B. F. (1962). *Walden two.* New York: Macmillan.

Sorohan, E. G. (1993). We do, therefore, we learn. *Training and Development, 47* (10), 47-48, 50, 52-55.

Spanard, J. A. (1990). Reentering college to complete the degree. *Review of Educational Research,* 3, 309-344.

Stake, R. (1983). The case study method in social inquiry. In G. F. Madaus, M. S. Scriven, & D. L. Stufflebeam (Eds.), *Evaluation models* (pp. 279-286). Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff.Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Grounded theory in practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thomson, P. (1988). *The school of hard knocks:A study on the on the assessment of experiential learning.* Payneham, Australia: TAFE National Center for Research and Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 295 033)

Thorndike, E. L. (1913). *Educational psychology: The psychology of learning.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Tough, A. (1979). *The adult learning projects: A fresh approach to theory and practice in adult learning.* (2nd. ed.). Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Tucker, R. W., & Murphy, J. D. (1990, October). *Comprehensive assessment of learning outcomes and processes for working adults.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Evaluation Association, Washington, DC.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

West, L., & Fraser, W. (1992). *The assessment of prior experiential learning in universities' admission procedures:* Canterbury, England: University of Kent. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 358 335).

Whitaker, U. (1989). *Assessing learning: Standards, principles & procedures.* Philadelphia: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case study research: design and methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sample Parts of a Portfolio

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING RESUME

JULIA WINTHROP

999 Alexander Road
Miami Lakes, FL 33333

(305) 777-6666 Home
(305) 555-4444 Work

I. CREDIT AWARD AREA:

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

12/94 - present	**Human Resources Manager**
6/92 - 11/94	**Human Resources Specialist** American Express Corporation Fort Lauderdale, FL
1/89 - 5/92	**Human Resources Manager** Macy's East Boynton, FL
9/85 - 12/88	**Assistant Human Resources Manager** Macy's New York, Inc. North Miami Beach, FL
12/82 - 8/85	**Store Manager** The Gap Store New York, NY

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ACTIVITIES

1/94 - present	**Active Member** Society for Human Resource Management
1/93 - present	**Active Member** American Society for Training and Development
1/92 - present	**Active Member** Association for Psychological Type

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

9/89 - 9/92 **Coordinator**
American Red Cross Blood Drive

6/87 - 6/92 **Coordinator**
United Way Campaign

2/88 - 2/89 **Volunteer**
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of North Miami

II. CREDIT SUPPORT AREA:

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

(See Documentation for full listing)

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS 1982 - Present = 372.5 hours of training including:

1994 **American Express Corporation**
Diversity Awareness Training (20 hrs)

1994 **American Express Corporation**
Leadership Training (40 hrs)

1993 **American Express Corporation**
Performance Based Interviewing (8 hrs)

1992 **American Express Corporation**
Orientation to Teams (7.5 hrs)

1985 **Macy's**
Manager Training (120 hrs)

BOOKS READ:

1994 Isabella, L.A. (1994) Managing the challenges of trigger events. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

1988 Barnes,J. (1987) Child development. New York: Harper & Row.

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

N/A

AWARDS AND HONORS

1994 **American Express Corporation**
Employee of the Month

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LEARNING ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Name: Julia Winthrop Disciplines: General Administration
Communication and Behavioral Sciences Date: 7/15/97 SS#: 100-00-0000

CREDIT AWARD AREA:

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE: List the learning experience components and corresponding competencies which you have acquired from professional work experiences. (List only those positions that were college-level and can be documented).

DATES	NO. OF YRS.	SOURCES OF LEARNING (Positions)	LEARNING EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS (Tasks and Responsibilities)	COMPETENCIES (Learning)	FACULTY USE ONLY LEVEL	FACULTY USE ONLY TOTAL
12/94 - Present	2.5	Human Resources Manager American Express Corporation	-manage 2 HR exempt employees and 2 clerical employees	Administration Supervision		
			-conduct staff performance reviews	Critical Thinking Communication		
			-develop and facilitate the Performance Management Process (goal setting, appraisal writing, development planning and career planning) for senior management	Critical Thinking Investigation and Research Communication		
			-formulate reports and give presentations	Communication Critical Thinking		
			-recruit and hire associate and management level employees for the telephone service center	Communication Interpersonal Relations		
			-counsel department of 700 employees and develop seminars to meet the needs of those affected by restructuring	Interpersonal Relations Creativity Communication		
			-appraise developmental needs of line managers, locates training vendors that match needs and oversee training facilitators	Critical Thinking Communication Investigation and Research Supervision		
			-coordinate and develop special courses in the area of "risk management"	Administration Creativity Communication		
			-conduct leadership skill building programs for managers	Interpersonal Relations Communication		

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE CONTINUED:

DATES	NO. OF YRS.	SOURCES OF LEARNING	LEARNING EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS	COMPETENCIES	FACULTY USE ONLY LEVEL	FACULTY USE ONLY TOTAL
5/92 - 11/94	2.5	Human Resources Specialist	- counseled employees in career development	Communication Interpersonal Relations		
			- prepared candidates for management assessment reviews	Communication Critical Thinking		
			- analyzed employee survey results	Investigation and Research Critical Thinking		
			- interviewed and counseled disabled workers	Communication Interpersonal Relations		
			- created support programs for displaced employees	Creativity Communication		
			- assessed source of conflict between staff and supervisors	Critical Thinking Communication		
			- developed solutions for conflict situations incorporating Myers-Briggs character type training	Critical Thinking Creativity		
			- created programs to address the needs of displaced employees	Critical Thinking Creativity		
			- analyzed employee survey results and recommended initiatives to improve morale	Investigation and Research Critical Thinking		
1/89 - 5/92	3.25	Human Resources Manager Macy's East	- organized meetings and workshops	Administration		
			- facilitated counseling sessions for group managers and their staffs	Communication Interpersonal Relations		
			- supervised Assistant Human Resource Manager and clerical employee	Supervision Communication		
			- recruited executives working with mangers and retail community for leads	Critical Thinking Investigation and Research		
			- conducted executive training seminars	Communication		
			- oversaw creation of special advertising	Creativity Critical Thinking Communication		

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE CONTINUED:

DATES	NO. OF YRS.	SOURCES OF LEARNING	LEARNING EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS	COMPETENCIES	FACULTY USE ONLY LEVEL/TOTAL	
9/85 - 12/88	3.25	Assistant Resources Manager Macy's New York, Inc.	- gave presentations to groups of 20 to 40 employees	Communication Interpersonal Relations		
			- developed classroom management techniques for training sessions	Communication Critical Thinking		
			- counseled employees on their career paths	Communication Interpersonal Relations		
			- organized and chaired the store-wide safety committee meeting	Communication Administration		
			- determined safety responsibilities for each department	Critical Thinking Communication		
			- evaluated performance of employees	Critical Thinking Communication		
			- coordinated large company functions	Critical Thinking Creativity		
			- facilitated meetings of group managers and sales managers	Communication Critical Thinking		
			- organized fundraising activities for the United Way campaign	Investigation and Research Critical Thinking		
12/82 - 8/85	3.5	Store Manager The Gap Store	- trained and motivated employees	Supervision Communication		
			- assessed and maintained inventory	Administration Critical Thinking		
			- practiced and promoted good customer service	Interpersonal Relations Communication		
			- planned for shortage reduction and sales maintenance	Critical Thinking Investigation and Research		
			- presented merchandise for optimal sales	Creativity		
			- created various store window displays	Creativity Critical Thinking		
			- oversaw sales staff	Communication Supervision		

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ACTIVITIES: List professional organizations and activities which provide college-level learning outside the workplace in which you are active. (Check if applicable: __See Documentation for full listing)

DATES	NO OF YRS.	SOURCES OF LEARNING	LEARNING EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS	COMPETENCIES	FACULTY USE ONLY TOTAL
1/94 - present	3.5	Active Member Society for Human Resource Management	- attend local meetings - organize fundraising events - assist in speaker search	Communication Interpersonal Relations	
1/93- present	4.5	Active Member American Society for Training and Development	- give presentations - participate in meetings - interact with speakers and members	Communication Interpersonal Relations	
1/92 – present	5.5	Active Member Association for Psychological Type	-write articles for newsletter -network with other members	Communication Investigation and Research	

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: List any college-level learning you have acquired through experience in the community such as church, temple activities, involvement with youth, adults, or the elderly, fundraising organizations, etc.... (Check if applicable___ See Documentation for full listing)

DATES	NO. OF YRS.	SOURCES OF LEARNING	LEARNING EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS	COMPETENCIES	FACULTY USE ONLY TOTAL
9/89 - 9/92	3	Coordinator American Red Cross Blood Drives	- prepared mailing lists - recruited donors - made phone inquiries	Communication Interpersonal Relations Administration Critical Thinking	
6/87 - 6/92	5	Coordinator United Way Campaign/Dade County Chapter	- planned meetings and interacted with other volunteers - developed and implemented fundraising activities	Communication Interpersonal Relations Creativity Critical Thinking	
2/88 - 2/89	1	Volunteer Big Brothers/Big Sisters	- interacted with child on daily basis - communicated with child's parent - determined activities on a weekly basis	Communication Interpersonal Relations Creativity Critical Thinking	

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CREDIT SUPPORT AREA:

EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING: List all training courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences attended for which you have not received transfer credit. Also note articles, books, videos, cassettes, etc., that enhanced your learning (Check if applicable:____ See Documentation for full listing)

DATES	COURSES, ETC.. (+ # of classroom hours)	COMPETENCIES
WORKSHOPS, etc....	1982 - present = 372.5 hrs. of training, including:	
1994	Diversity Awareness Training - (20 hrs)	Communication Interpersonal Relations
1994	Leadership Training - (40 hrs)	Administration Communication
1993	Performance Based Interviewing - (40 hrs)	Critical Thinking Communication
1992	Orientation to Teams - (7.5 hrs)	Interpersonal Relations Communication
1985	Manager Training - (120 hrs)	Administration Communication
BOOKS READ:		
1994	Isabella, L.A. (1994) Managing the challenge of trigger events. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.	Critical Thinking Interpersonal Relations
1988	Barnes, J. (1987) Child Development. New York: Harper & Row.	Communication Interpersonal Relations

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES: List those licenses in which college-level learning has occurred (or is occurring).

DATES	NO. OF YRS.	SOURCE OF LICENSE	LICENSE
		NA	

AWARDS AND HONORS: (Check if applicable___ See Documentation for full listing)

DATE	SOURCE OF AWARD	AWARDS/HONORS
1994	American Express Corporation	Employee of the Month

word/winthrop

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Sample Autobiographical Learning Essay

(Please be aware that the notations in the margins are for illustrative purposes only. Students should not include them in their ALE.)

I was born and raised in the bustling city of New York—Brooklyn to be exact. All through my childhood and adolescence, I was, like most teenaged girls, enamored with the world of high fashion. Upon graduation from high school, it wasn't surprising that I enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. In a few years I graduated with an Associate of Arts degree majoring in fashion buying and merchandising.

Introduction

It was in my first position in 1982, as a Store Manager working for The Gap clothing stores, that I learned managerial skills. After gaining experience working in varied retail positions, I became a Store Manager in Training (SMIT) in Poughkeepsie and in White Plains, New York. As a "SMIT," I apprenticed with a veteran store manager observing how he dealt with customers, hired staff, conducted inventory, and enacted store policy. As a Store Manager I was able to apply this knowledge first hand. The employees at

Topic Sentence = Competency

Concrete Experiences

Reader please note: this is an excerpt from a 28-page portfolio essay.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the store consisted of very young and inexperienced part-timers working side-by-side with long service full-time staff. I successfully created an atmosphere where both workers could operate cohesively by having the older, full-time staff serve as mentors to the younger part-timers. At the same time that the older workers trained the younger, the younger transmitted their enthusiasm and energy to the older, thus, creating a harmonious and motivated staff.

Reflective Observation

As I gained experience, I learned the importance of having good interpersonal skills in training and motivating employees. In teaching new employees, I learned how to relate to each one individually, teaching them The Gap rules on cash register control, customer service and the opening and closing procedures. Although new to the "teacher" role, I soon found that I could put newcomers at ease enabling them to trust me and, consequently, to learn procedures much faster.

Topic Sentence = Competency

Generalization and Application

Critical thinking also played a big part in my daily activities as a manager, especially when I transferred

Topic Sentence = Competency

to a very high-volume store. Constant problem-solving characterized most of my day. For example, along with higher-volume came the burdensome reality of shortages in merchandise. With the assistance of the district manager and dedicated long-service employees, I learned ways to safeguard the merchandise while still making it available and appealing to the customer. By placing a store "greeter" near the entrance, we could effectively promote good customer service while also creating an unitimidating sense of surveillance. In the end, we reduced shortage and maintained sales.

Experience

Application

Moreover, as a Store Manager, I was able to explore my creativity. I learned, first hand, methods of presenting merchandise that met company standards. But my real creative talents flourished in my appealing and stylized arrangement of clothing and accessories for the store's window displays. Our store was located on a busy pedestrian street, rather than a mall, so windows could make a big difference in sales. Still fresh as a manager, I was nonetheless honored with an Appreciation Award for the appealing and innovative nature of my window displays.

Topic Sentence = Competency

Notes Award Received

In 1985, I decided to relocate to South Florida in order to be closer to my elderly parents who had recently moved here themselves. Although I chose to resign my managerial position with The Gap, I was certain that I could recuperate my losses with time. While working part-time at Macy's Department store, I was told of an opening for an Assistant Human Resources Manager soon to be available. After some consideration, I decided to apply and take the challenge of career change into the Human Resources field. I was soon offered my first position in the career I have now come to love.

Transitional Paragraph

My first Human Resources position taught me, for one thing, the importance of strong communication skills in training employees. This position centered mainly around training, and as such, required that I customarily speak to groups of 20 to 40 employees.

Topic Sentence = Competency

I had to develop public speaking skills right away and quickly overcome the anxiety that comes with being the center of attention. In order to do this, I studied how to maintain good eye contact with my audience while still keeping to the text at hand. Also, to liven up the material, I tried varying speech patterns and

Concrete Experience

volume, throwing in a joke here and there, and moving about the room, rather than hiding behind a podium or desk.

I carried over my skills in interpersonal communication learned as a store manager, as well. As a trainer, it was my task to keep each class up to pace with the others. That meant offering individual guidance and assistance to employees experiencing difficulties. Classroom management also meant learning how to tame the "class clown" and simultaneously draw out the introvert. As I matured in this job, I was also responsible for counseling employees on their career paths and assisting them in finding creative solutions to problems with other employees.

Topic Sentence = Competency

Application and Experience

Diplomatic but effective communication skills were also required in my role as Chair of the store-wide safety committee. Here, I was responsible for assigning employees to various areas of the store. They were responsible for locating and reporting any safety hazards at monthly meetings, which I in turn conducted. After the Operations Manager reviewed the problems and prioritized them, I prepared updates

Topic Sentence = Competency

DOCUMENTATION

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

TRAVEL RELATED SERVICES
An American Express company

American Express
Travel Related Services Company, Inc.
Southern Region Operations Center
777 American Expressway
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33337

July 1, 1997

To the Chairperson - Portfolio Committee
Barry University
School of Adult and Continuing Education

This is to verify that Julia Winthrop has been employed by American Express Corporation since January of 1989 to the present. Ms. Winthrop was first hired as a Human Resources Specialist and then was promoted to her current position as Human Resources Manager.

Human Resources Specialist 6/92 - 11/94: As a Human Resources Specialist, Ms. Winthrop performed a number of duties. Her main responsibility was to counsel employees in career development. To this end she created support programs for disabled and displaced employees. She received on-going training in this area and incorporated her expertise on the Myers-Briggs character type indicator into her work in conflict resolution between staff and supervisors. Additionally, she prepared Credit Department candidates for performance assessment reviews. She also helped to evaluate employees for team leadership positions. Julia also delivered numerous workshops to managers in order to improve communication between labor and management teams. Her excellent organizational, communication, critical thinking and interpersonal skills in accomplishing her goals led to her promotion in 1992.

Human Resources Manager 12/94 - present: In December of 1994, Julia became Human Resources Manager for the Telephone Service Center and was responsible for overseeing consulting services for a department of over 700 employees. She administers tailor-made, in-house training programs and meets with line managers in the southeast region to appraise developmental needs of employees. She also supervisors a staff of four and creates training courses for senior managers. Julia is in charge of developing and processing the company's Performance Management Process. This includes goal setting, appraisal writing and career planning for managers. Her outstanding communication and administrative skills have made her one of the most sought after and respected employees in our organization. Julia recruits and hires associate and management level employees for the Telephone Service Center.

In the five years that she has been with American Express Corporation, Julia has repeatedly demonstrated the highest levels of achievement and competency. We at look forward to her continued growth with the company.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Joseph Catalano

Joseph Catalano
Vice President
Telephone Service Center

Appendix B

Portfolio Document Review Guides That Reference Workplace Learning

NB: References in parentheses in some of the document review guides that follow identify the other participants by a letter name, for example, Mr. R., Ms. R., Mr. K., Ms. G., etc.). I assigned letter names to students at this point in analysis (prior to selecting the pseudonyms refereed to in this article).

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay/Goal statement

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
African American Female Kenyatta	▪ begins career with MDC Dept of Solid Waste/responsibilities and trust given to her for the first time	▪ throughout her career and community involvement, she has always sought balance between life experience and textbook education ▪ she attended seminars and read about the Geographic Information System in order to excel as a SWM Route Coordinator ▪ plans to apply her college learning to streamline the budget within her department ▪ wants to supplement her practical experience learned on the job with theory learned in MBA ▪	▪ first supervisor encouraged her to advance her career ▪ when she became a supervisor she told and trained her staff so they knew and could perform what was expected of them

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay/Goal statement

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
African American Male Luther	▪ part-time position as real estate salesperson for the last 11 years satisfied his entrepreneurial yearnings ▪ started part time janitorial business in 1996 based on previous high school experience with a teacher who had his own janitorial business	▪ lists training in resume on code enforcement—only training listed in portfolio aside from 16 credits from MDCC ▪ feels his professional experience has been complemented by academic learning ▪ wants to expand his business and also go to Law school	▪ expresses strong work ethic ▪ early interest in law, was on Honor Court at MDCC ▪ mentor helped him establish Teen King, a youth self-help organization ▪ believes almost anything can be accomplished with hard work and effort ▪ ethical issues arose concerning the Union, he came active in the Union and a Union steward because he believes it's important to have an educated union representing workers

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
Caribbean Female Antoinette	▪ work positions helped her become who she is today as a professional from first position to current position ▪ developed more competencies throughout her various positions ▪ talks about maturing professionally in her HRM position ▪ proud of her ability to wear many hats in her positions	▪ has had continuos training throughout her career ▪ has read many books from which she learned and applied administrative, communication, creative, and interpersonal skills ▪ names five books in areas of supervision, administration, communication, and interpersonal relations—what she learned from each and how she applied it ▪ wants to get an MBA and use that learning with her experiences to direct a medical center for under privileged	▪ first full time job as secretary, demonstrates strong work ethic ▪ steadily rose in position after position gaining more skills along the way ▪ strong work ethic strengthened in her current position—feels greater sense of responsibility and accountability as office manager

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay/Goal Statement

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
Caribbean Male Churchill	▪ early interest in sales, began career as a Merchandiser in 1972 ▪ 2nd position as a technician and assistant dispatcher allowed him more flexibility to devote time to his studies and gave him the experience of supervising others ▪ his skills improved from job-to-job as his improved existing competencies and acquired new ones through new responsibilities ▪ in his 3rd position as Sales Manager with Tropical products he gained valuable experience by managing sales people ▪ 4th position as Managing director for his family business offered a host of new challenges increasing his skills	▪ his belief to move to next level in his company he will need education/degree as well as experience ▪ during first job, he realized he needed to learn computer skills so he enrolled in 400 hour computer studies program—training would complement his growing experience ▪ manager training course "yielded improvements in all areas of his skills"—training complements on the job learning ▪ again at Eastern Airlines intensive training for Customer service/sales rep informs practice ▪ as Zone Manager he recommended and gave training to improve employees' skills and enhance job performance ▪ initial position at current company, 3M, began with participation in extensive training program	▪ always recognized the value of education ▪ plans to pursue a Master's degree, committed to continuing his education beyond the Bachelor's ▪ demonstrates a desire to grow in work positions, moved on when to find positions that utilized his skills and offered him opportunity to grow ▪ moving to USA he started at entry-level position with Eastern Airlines ▪ as a Zone manager at Eastern Airlines he coached, counseled, and supported his staff

		▪ he has taken many courses throughout his career with 3M—for example, Repair Shop Mgt course provided him information on running a repair shop which in turn gave him knowledge needed to interact with clients ▪ as trainer in 3M uses principles of instructional design vis-a-vis materials and subjects ▪ desire to advance his career to upper management with 3M through his drive and education (plans to pursue a Master's degree	

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay/Pilot survey

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
Caucasian Female Ginger	▪ after high school worked as a nurse's aide prior to studying to become a nurse, this was a valuable experience and introduction to medical field ▪ early work experience "touched her heart" and confirmed her early interest in the human body and desire to become a nurse—showed her that nursing was combination of technical skills and people skills ▪ value of observing others as a means of learning ▪ promotion to charge nurse great honor—trust and respect from peers her real reward—also her biggest challenge ▪ outpatient surgery advent required increased interpersonal and communication skills to accomplish patient satisfaction	▪ willingness to learn evident from her first job as an aide ▪ training for RN career at St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing provided discipline and good combination of academic teaching and hand-on training ▪ in-service training, hands-on experience, nursing journals combined to hone her skills in her first years of nursing ▪ weekly in-service education meetings were important as Primary Nurse II to bridge gap between theory and practice and it promoted team work ▪ continuing education promoted by her superiors and herself ▪ leaving Mt. Sinai for Coral reef Hospital required more training for pediatric unit—took old skills and gained new ▪ while working PT	▪ had teachers early on who were willing to help her learn more as an aide ▪ during first 9 months as an aide she realized nursing was a "team effort"—speaks of this throughout her portfolio ▪ in first position had to accept floor nurse assignment for 6 months in order to pave the way to the excitement of ER nursing ▪ gratitude to those who mentored her throughout her career ▪ from the beginning supervisory position she saw her leadership style as people-oriented ▪ as leader she wants to sustain and fortify

	▪ changes in nursing had her balancing resources (cost containment) and patient satisfaction (quality care in all areas—education, pre and post, family, etc.) ▪ concept of perioperative nursing in surgery worked initially but as procedures became even more specialized, specialization and teamwork replaced all around individual nurse ▪ "surgeon may be the boss, anesthesiologist may run the shoe, but the nurse coordinates the events in the ER" ▪ she "looks forward to each new day with a sense of anticipation and excitement even after 20+ years of nursing"—she never stops dreaming or reaching for the next level ▪ all of her experiences helped groom her for coordinator position in surgical unit ▪	at Mt Sinai, increased need for diversity training and patient training to appreciate cultural differences and mitigate patient fear, respectively ▪ in Mt. Sinai surgical unit, her training in computers began (mid-late 80's)	▪ as a leader/Head Nurse she was fortunate to associate with a group (staff) that recognized hard work and dedication as the basic foundation of patient care—value of the team ▪ also as her leadership skills grew in Charge Nurse position, she realized she wanted to provide answers and resource avenues that provided opportunity for all to grow ▪ along with her patient sensitivity and sense of humor, she developed a pro active patient philosophy-encouraging patients to take a more active approach to their health care—move from patient centered to patient directed health care process focus

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
Caucasian Male Carl	▪ in each position he took, he was able to build upon previous ones ▪ knowledge gained from his work experiences allowed him to open successful pt business in 1998 ▪ first position post RETS was to install cellular phones ▪ second position was as trainer of customers on telex machines ▪ started looking for work with Metro Dade Transit Agency (MDTA) and secured position as a Transit Radio Tech ▪ promoted to Transit Communi-cation Tech 3 within 1 1/2 years with increased responsibilities ▪ position as acting chief for 13 months helped him be better radio tech supervisor ▪ knowledge gained at MDTA used to open his own part time business	▪ all his learning from experience and training ▪ obtaining the Bachelor's degree will not make him more qualified technically for his job ▪ Bachelor's degree program taught him many theories he could apply on the job ▪ also can't advance in his career without his degree—wanting to be assistant chief of communications was great motivator for him to return to college ▪ training for supervisor certification helped him a great deal in his position as supervisor ▪ enrolled in many courses over two-year period to deal with discipline, performance appraisal, communication and used what he learned on a daily basis	▪ career goal--hopes to enter top management position in county government within five years ▪ will eventually enter a Master's program ▪ demonstrates strong ethic—worked diligently to adjust and learn new responsibilities as his career advanced in MDTA ▪ defines role of supervisory as mentor, supporter, trainer, teacher, and monitor ▪ believes business discipline especially areas of administration, supervision, labor mgt, and business communication as well as communication discipline represent his learning

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio essay

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION	OTHER
Hispanic Female Mariela	▪ in first work position as Spanish teacher in local high school-learned how to deal with students from experience not from learning acquired through teacher certification ▪ importance of children's parents and home in evaluating students' needs	▪ position as Librarian in Cuba learned on the job and through certification ▪ importance of theory and practice-Cobol language critical to apply learning-gives examples of application in essay ▪ <u>expansion of knowledge in all career positions through training and certifications used on the job</u> ▪ decision to pursue AA, BPA, and Master's degrees in order to advance career	▪ first job offered opportunity to learn skills that would be used in the future ▪ skills learned in first position were transferred, applied, and expanded in next teaching position ▪ expansion of skills as Librarian, especially creativity, organization, developing and mentoring others ▪ transferability of learning in City Clerk job for city of Miami Springs and throughout rise in this organization

DOCUMENT REVIEW
CATEGORY: WORK LIFE
SOURCE: Portfolio Essay

PARTICIPANT	VALUE OF EXPERIENCE IN WORK (WL.VLE)	MARRIAGE OF PRACTICE & EDUCATION (WL.IMPT)	VALUE OF MENTORS, etc. (WL.MT, WL.MTO, WL.HSM, WL.VTM)
Hispanic Male Juan	▪ while in college he began working for City of Opa-Locka—his first opportunity to work , grow, and develop in office environment ▪ impact of his work enabled management to make better decisions and has a strong work ethic—sees each new position as a learning and career opportunity ▪ second city he worked for, South Miami, was under his former boss in Opa-Locka—he was hired as collections specialist in charge of developing an automated collections system ▪ moved to city of North Miami for the opportunity to work in a large data center and with experienced programmers with a formal MIS plan ▪ as his projects grew	▪ coming to USA in 1979, he realized, in high school, that school would serve as a vehicle to achieve all his goals enrolled at MDCC as a computer science major ▪ in first position applied formal, college training to streamline office procedures ▪ in his second position his accounting courses were used to accomplish his job responsibilities ▪ left city of opa-Locka position in 1990 in order to complete Associate's degree in early 1991 ▪ learned a great deal from school and work during his time with the city of Opa-Locka ▪ at Miami Dade Housing authority he recommended training for staff and gave training to improve on the job performance	▪ in high school he developed a passion for computers and electronic rocessing—took all the courses he could including advanced courses and college classes at MDCC arranged by his teachers and counselor, Ms. Manning who was an early mentor (WL.HSM) ▪ Ms. Manning enabled him to get funding for college (WL.HSM) ▪ management-style is supportive and gives people room for growth like Mr. R., Ms. R., Ms. K., Mr. K., and Ms. G (WL.MTO) ▪ stresses

	in importance that transcended city boundaries catching attention of city officials—led to offer from Miami-Dade housing Authority (MDHA) in the position of systems analyst with supervision responsibilities ▪ he became chief of MIS in 1995 at MDHA taking on greater responsibilities and more learning ▪ one of the most challenging aspects of his job as chief of MIS for MDTA is to design and develop communication infrastructure—requires coordination skills ▪ wants to secure a high profile position in the future in computer industry so he can teach young computer professionals customer service skills necessary to compete in today's market ▪ also wants to serve as a consultant across the nation to share his ideas and experiences in the computer field ▪ wants, like Mr. R. to work with the gov't in increasing efficiency and to publish a book about his experiences in the MIS world	(computer field, like nursing moves at a very fast pace)—believes when you "give people the tolls to do their work they perform better ▪ personal goal to graduate with a Bachelor's degree, the first person in his family to do so—it's been a lifelong dream and he will gain much confidence and pride in himself as a professional when he achieves it (like Ms. K, Mr. K., Ms. R., Ms. G.)	importance of teamwork (like Ms. R) both within his unit and working with housing agencies across the nation (WL.MTO)